

#### A PERIOD OF ARMED TRUCE

view an experiment was made in Gilan in 1920-1921, and Ambassador Rothstein, on the other hand, tried to influence the Iranian internal situation from the strategic point of Teheran. In the eyes of Soviet leaders the coup of February, 1921, that swept Zia ed-Din into power did not radically alter the picture. Zia was regarded as a tool of British policy, and his regime meant to the Soviets only a reaffirmation of British imperialist influence in Iran. Zia's denunciation of the Anglo-Iranian agreement left Soviet leaders unimpressed. His proclamations of liberal-radical reforms were branded as hypocrisy and as a cloak for more sinister British designs on Iran. The fact that Zia was aided in his coup by Reza Khan did not attract enough notice from the Soviet leaders. Not even the overthrow of Zia ed-Din by the latter was immediately considered as of deep significance.

Eventually Reza's emergence as the dominant power in Iranian politics, especially when he assumed the premiership in 1923, caused the Soviets to give greater attention to the role that the former Cosack trooper might play in Iran's history.

The great news to Moscow was, however, Reza's overthrow of the Qajar dynasty in 1925 and his formal assumption of royal—and dictatorial—powers. The time was then come to analyze Reza's actions with "scientific" precision, to revise, if necessary, the attitude toward his regime and Iran as a whole, and, on the basis of the correct interpretation of the new historical phenomenon, to draw practical conclusions as to the strategy and tactics to be employed.

The change of regime in Iran in 1925 gave rise to an open controversy among Soviet Marxists—so open as to be

almost unbelievable to all those who are accustomed to the efficient streamlining of Soviet policy since the emergence of Stalin as an undisputed ruler of Russia. The years of 1924-1927 were, we must remember, the years of interregnum in Russia: Lenin's death left the Communist party divided and uncertain of its future. The rivalry between Stalin and Trotsky was ripening to lead to a final showdown at the Fifteenth Party Congress toward the end of 1927. For a few brief years the party members, if not the Russian people, enjoyed a semblance of freedom of thought and speech. Controversies among the party factions ranged from the question of the correct attitude toward collectiviza-